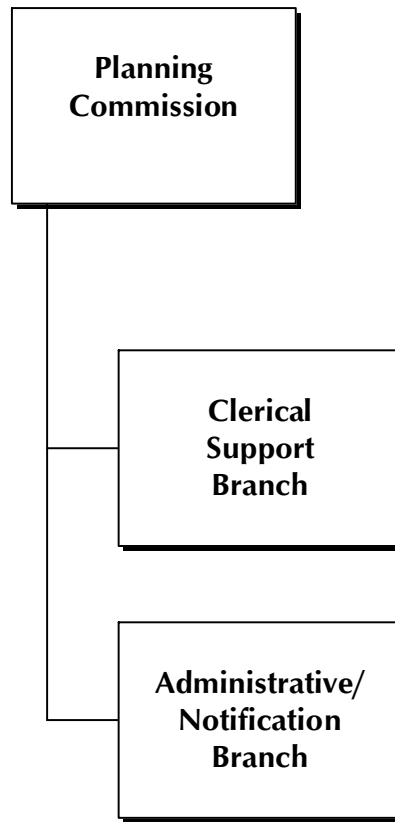


Planning Commission



Mission

To provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals on land use policies and plans that will result in orderly, balanced and equitable County growth, and to provide administrative support to the Planning Commission.

Focus

The agency provides staff support to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors in matters relating to the County's land use policy development. The agency also ensures that interested residents' reactions are obtained on County plans, ordinance amendments and land use applications by conducting public sessions weekly, eleven months per year, and forwarding recommendations on these matters to the Board of Supervisors in a timely fashion.

The Planning Commission, through its public hearing process, provides a forum for residents to make recommendations on the County's Comprehensive Plan, both in terms of policy and specific site requests, as well as other land use applications mandated by state and County Codes. The Commission staff is further mandated by the Board of Supervisors to perform notifications and verifications for abutting and adjacent property owners in all land use cases heard before the Board of Supervisors and the Planning Commission.

Obtaining citizen input on pending land use applications and/or policy issues is a key driver for the Planning Commission and its staff. In the last three years, the Planning Commission has averaged 85 regular Commission and committee meetings annually to ensure that the public had ample opportunity to comment on land use matters affecting the greater Fairfax community. During public hearings held from 1999-2003, the Commission heard verbal statements from 2,813 residents and also received more than 6,200 written position statements on various land use applications.

Planning Commission

The following major trends have been observed during this timeframe:

(1) Statistics indicate that the Board of Supervisors has consistently concurred with 99 percent of the recommendations forwarded by the Planning Commission, and this trend has continued for the past decade. This high concurrence rate demonstrates the level of commitment undertaken by the Commission in ensuring that the majority of issues raised by applicants and surrounding neighborhoods are resolved prior to consideration by the Board of Supervisors.

(2) Since the County is almost fully developed, the high percentage of remaining land available is infill. Such properties inherently have a large number of problems as well as active resident neighbors. The resulting trend has been and continues to be an increase in time needed for in-depth negotiation between residents, Commissioners and applicants, resulting in an ever-increasing number of deferrals of public hearings and/or decisions. A short-term deferral (to a date fewer than 30 days from the original hearing date) by the Planning Commission and/or the Board of Supervisors requires staff of the Commission Office to notify abutting property owners again with the new hearing date. Each short-term deferral has an associated cost in staff processing time and postage. For longer-term deferrals, while the applicant bears the cost for re-notification by certified mail, the Commission Office must still verify the accuracy of all notifications. Given the continuing high level of complexity of infill development cases, it is expected that this trend will continue, along with its subsequent impact on the workload of the Commission staff.

(3) With its average of 85 open meetings per year, residents are provided many opportunities to address the Planning Commission. As noted, during its public hearings alone, the Commission heard verbal statements from 2,813 residents and received over 6,200 written position statements between 1999 and 2003. Committee meetings also provide a forum for input on policy issues during initial deliberations by the Commission and several hundred County residents have taken this opportunity during this same timeframe, particularly over such matters as the Residential Development Criteria changes and the Chesapeake Bay Ordinance Amendments. Such input is highly valued by the Commission and assists greatly in forging needed compromises on issues at hand.

THINKING STRATEGICALLY

Strategic issues for the Department include:

- o Continuing to provide a forum for public comment on policy issues related to development;
- o Providing recommendations that are reasonable and logical and that result in Board concurrence; and
- o Continuing to provide the opportunity and the arena for in-depth negotiation between residents, Commissioners and applicants.

(4) The number of Commission committee meetings has remained high due to the interest of members in reaching out to other boards and commissions on related areas of interest. The Commission operates joint committees with the Fairfax County School Board, Park Authority Board, Redevelopment and Housing Authority Board, Transportation Advisory Commission and the Environmental Quality Advisory Commission, who meet on a regular basis, as well as other ongoing committees established to ease transactions of normal business. The Commission also establishes ad-hoc committees as needed on special interest issues that may arise such as its recent Residential Development Criteria Committee, which focused on needed revisions. Such committees are established for specific study areas of a short-term nature that may require multiple meetings with County staff and relevant interested parties. While this results in many additional committee meetings for its members and administrative staff, the Commission has found that it can provide input to the Board of Supervisors much more productively.


(5) Over the past year and a half, the eight-person administrative staff of the Commission experienced an unusually high turnover rate due to retirements, promotions and resignations. This affected several key positions in the office, including the Clerk to the Commission and the Deputy Clerk, prompting the agency to realign duties among staff members and upgrade one administrative position to better reflect current requirements and responsibilities in the office.

Planning Commission

New Initiatives and Recent Accomplishments in Support of the Fairfax County Vision

 Building Livable Spaces	Recent Success	FY 2006 Initiative	Cost Center
Averaging 85 Commission and Committee meetings per year over the last three years, the Commission has been, and continues to be, able to work with County residents to help create desirable places to live and work through ongoing review of land use applications, implementation of the County's Comprehensive Plan and review of policy issues through its committee structure.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Connecting People and Places	Recent Success	FY 2006 Initiative	Cost Center
As part of its land development review, including both pending land use applications and Area Plan Review nominations, the Commission carefully considers the adequacy and safety of the existing and/or planned road network and works with developers, through the proffer system, to amend or provide enhancements as appropriate.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Practicing Environmental Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2006 Initiative	Cost Center
The Commission has advised the Board of Supervisors on a broad spectrum of environmental concerns relating to the Chesapeake Bay and the Occoquan watersheds; the impact of noise and light pollution; and provision of sidewalks and trails which protect and enhance the environment, as well as open space areas in the County and how to make the best use of existing resources.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide
 Creating a Culture of Engagement	Recent Success	FY 2006 Initiative	Cost Center
The Commission uses Channel 16 to inform, interact informally with and otherwise engage the public in its activities. In addition to its televised public hearings, the Commission hosts a monthly "PC Roundtable" series that explores various planning topics in a timely manner and offers the public the opportunity to ask questions through a "mailbag" feature.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide

Planning Commission

 Exercising Corporate Stewardship	Recent Success	FY 2006 Initiative	Cost Center
Continuing the long-term commitment to customer service, staff will redesign notification instructions for land use applications and Area Plan Review nominations to be more "user-friendly" and allow accessibility through the website and e-mail. In addition, training will be developed on all notification processes.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Agencywide

Budget and Staff Resources

Agency Summary					
Category	FY 2004 Actual	FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan	FY 2005 Revised Budget Plan	FY 2006 Advertised Budget Plan	FY 2006 Adopted Budget Plan
Authorized Positions/Staff Years					
Regular	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8	8/ 8
Expenditures:					
Personnel Services	\$412,516	\$478,074	\$478,074	\$496,122	\$496,122
Operating Expenses	201,666	206,976	206,976	208,468	208,468
Total Expenditures	\$614,182	\$685,050	\$685,050	\$704,590	\$704,590

Position Summary	
1 Executive Director	1 Planning Technician I
1 Management Analyst III	1 Administrative Assistant V
1 Management Analyst II	1 Administrative Assistant IV
	2 Administrative Assistants III
TOTAL POSITIONS	
8 Positions / 8.0 Staff Years	

FY 2006 Funding Adjustments

The following funding adjustments from the FY 2005 Revised Budget Plan are necessary to support the FY 2006 program:

- ◆ **Employee Compensation** **\$18,048**
An increase of \$18,048 associated with salary adjustments necessary to support the County's compensation program.
- ◆ **Operating Expenses** **\$1,492**
An increase of \$1,000 in PC replacement charges based on an increase in the annual contribution for PC replacement by \$100 per PC, from \$400 to \$500 and an increase of \$492 for Information Technology charges based on the agency's historic usage.

Board of Supervisors' Adjustments

The following funding adjustments reflect all changes to the FY 2006 Advertised Budget Plan, as approved by the Board of Supervisors on April 25, 2005:

- ◆ The Board of Supervisors made no adjustments to this agency.

Planning Commission

Changes to FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes in the FY 2005 Revised Budget Plan since passage of the FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2004 Carryover Review and all other approved changes through December 31, 2004:

- ◆ There have been no revisions to this agency since approval of the FY 2005 Adopted Budget Plan.

The following funding adjustments reflect all approved changes to the FY 2005 Revised Budget Plan from January 1, 2005 through April 18, 2005. Included are all adjustments made as part of the FY 2005 Third Quarter Review:

- ◆ The Board of Supervisors made no adjustments to this agency.

Key Performance Measures

Goal

To provide recommendations to the Board of Supervisors and/or the Board of Zoning Appeals on land use policies and plans that will result in orderly, balanced and equitable County growth, and to provide administrative support to the Planning Commission.

Objectives

- ◆ To ensure that citizens' reactions and input are obtained on all land use-related applications by conducting weekly public sessions, 11 months per year; holding committee sessions as deemed necessary by the Planning Commission membership; and maintaining the 99 percent Planning Commission recommendations approved by the Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ To continue legal notification processing on pending land use cases by maintaining the percent of notifications verified at 90 percent within 17 days prior to the scheduled hearing date for hearings scheduled before the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors.
- ◆ To continue to produce Planning Commission actions for the public record by preparing 100 percent of summaries and verbatim transcripts within 3 working days and meeting minutes within one month of hearing date.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with service provided over the telephone at 98 percent.
- ◆ To maintain customer satisfaction with web site service at its attained current level of 95 percent.

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Estimate/Actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
Output:					
Public sessions held	65	58	65 / 53	65	60
Committee meetings held	37	22	30 / 21	25	25
Notifications verified for Planning Commission (PC)	201	204	210 / 140	210	185
Notifications verified for Board of Supervisors (BOS)	100	141	110 / 110	140	120
Area Plans Review Notifications verified	79	72	110 / 93	75	NA
Verbatim pages completed	780	650	800 / 552	700	650
Minute pages completed	933	645	825 / 570	725	625

Planning Commission

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Estimate/Actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
Output:					
Summaries completed	65	231	65 / 53	65	60
Information requests processed	18,522	16,800	18,000 / 17,350	16,000	12,750
Efficiency:					
Average cost per public session/committee meeting	\$1,856	\$2,414	\$2,033 / \$2,527	\$2,146	\$2,280
Average cost per notification processed for PC/BOS hearings	\$75	\$72	\$80 / \$120	\$76	\$118
Average cost per Area Plan review verification	\$91	\$168	\$110 / \$110	\$161	NA
Average hours required for complete meeting summary and verbatim pages	17	23	33 / 23	29	28
Average hours required for completion of set of minutes	26	36	28 / 10	26	12
Average time (in minutes) spent per website inquiry	12	8	8 / 5	8	3
Average time (in minutes) spent per telephone or in-person inquiry	10	5	5 / 5	5	3
Service Quality:					
Area Plans Review Submissions reviewed within 15 working days	79	72	110 / 110	110	NA
Verifications processed within 17 days prior to hearing dates for PC/BOS public hearings	252	265	270 / 200	270	200
Average backlog of sets of minutes (regular and committee) to date	32	35	10 / 30	10	12
Percent of committee minutes completed within one month of meeting date	68%	80%	80% / 70%	80%	85%
Percent of regular sets of minutes completed within one month of meeting date	17%	62%	50% / 76%	50%	85%
Information requests processed within one day or less	18,390	16,516	16,500 / 17,275	15,700	12,750
Information requests processed within two days	481	284	1,500 / 75	300	50
Outcome:					
Percent of Planning Commission actions approved by BOS	98%	99%	99% / 100%	99%	99%
Percent of notifications verified within 17 days of PC/BOS hearing deadlines	84%	100%	90% / 90%	90%	90%
Percent of summaries and verbatim pages completed within three working days	100%	100%	100% / 100%	100%	100%

Planning Commission

Indicator	Prior Year Actuals			Current Estimate	Future Estimate
	FY 2002 Actual	FY 2003 Actual	FY 2004 Estimate/Actual	FY 2005	FY 2006
Outcome:					
Percent of customers satisfied with service provided via phone or direct contact	90%	96%	98% / 98%	98%	98%
Percent of customers satisfied with service response provided by website	85%	95%	95% / 98%	95%	95%

Performance Measurement Results

The Planning Commission held a total of 74 Commission and committee meetings in FY 2004 to ensure public input on land use matters affecting their communities. This 7.5 percent decrease from the FY 2003 meeting schedule was primarily attributable to both inclement weather, which forced the cancellation of several planned meetings, and the increased number of deferrals of complicated land use matters which resulted in other meeting cancellations. Despite the cancellations, the Commission continued its high concurrence rate of 99 percent with the Board of Supervisors on land use actions and anticipates the same in both FY 2005 and FY 2006.

Directly resulting from the lower number of regular meetings held in FY 2004, the Commission's Clerical Branch decreased output in the number of summaries and verbatim pages produced. There was also a drop in total minute pages completed from the previous fiscal year due to both the number and length of meetings held. However, given this decrease, the administrative staff was able to achieve a 14 percentage point increase over FY 2003 on its target of completing regular minutes within one month. Staff moved forward toward this target despite a high level of staff turnover and retirements in FY 2004. It is anticipated the administrative staff will post an even higher percentage of minutes completed within the one month goal, while simultaneously maintaining 100 percent completion rates for summaries and verbatims within the stated goal of three working days.

At the same time, the Commission's Administrative/Notifications Branch saw a 27.5 percent decrease in the number of total notifications verified for the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission public hearings resulting from the decrease in the number of applications and the increase in the number of deferrals for scheduled public hearings. Although the overall numbers were down, 100 percent of verifications were accomplished within the stated goal of 17 days before scheduled hearing dates. The Planning Commission continued to review submissions in a timely fashion, as less than one percent of deferrals for either Commission or Board public hearings were due to notification problems. The Branch also reviewed a total of 93 Out-of-Turn and Area Plan Review (APR) nominations, ensuring that notifications were fulfilled and appropriate submission requirements for APR notification were met. According to the currently adopted schedule, there will not be an Area Plan Review in FY 2006, which is why there are no estimates in this category for FY 2006.

The Commission staff continues to offer excellent customer service, and as measured by ongoing surveys, to achieve a favorable response rate greater than 98 percent from its customers through telephone and direct contacts. Staff also realized a 98 percent satisfaction rate on Web site responses. It should be noted that the number of hours spent by staff on updating Web site agenda-related information is expected to increase in FY 2005 and FY 2006 because staff has been asked to provide more frequent updates and post additional materials.